



THE FRONT OF THE MUSEUM, FROM THE CENTRAL PARK DRIVEWAY.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.

By C. Stuart Johnson.



NEW YORK has as yet advanced but little claim to rank as an art center. In the not distant past, indeed, there could be found only a very slender foundation for the support of such a pretension. But in recent years the artistic advancement of the metropolis has been both multiform and rapid. The immense accumulation of wealth, which has given her so tremendous a financial preponderance among the cities of the new world, has made her the focus of

the nascent energies of American artists, and has drawn into her possession a large and increasing store of the works of contemporary and even classical foreign masters. A time will surely come when New York, the social and intellectual capital of the western hemisphere, will occupy a rank in the artistic world not unworthy to be compared with that of Paris, London, Dresden, Munich, Rome, Florence, or any of the old world cities made famous by their art treasures.

Already she has much to which, notwithstanding the sneers of envious rivals or unpatriotic detractors, she may fairly point with pride. It is the fashion to charge her with soulless utilitarianism, and with lamentable lack of public spirit, and yet art is becoming more and



"ON THE OLD SOD," BY WILLIAM MAGRATH.

Presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Dr. William Carr.

more an element of her citizens' collective and individual lives, and the knowledge and the appreciation of that which is good in architecture, painting, and sculpture are being more and diffused among her people.

To such great public collections as those of the Louvre or the Luxembourg, which have been powerful factors in fixing the high standards of Parisian art, New York cannot as yet show anything fully comparable. But in the Metropolitan Museum she has an institution which, though a mere infant in years, has grown with wonderful rapidity, and today includes a wealth of exhibits of the greatest interest and importance.

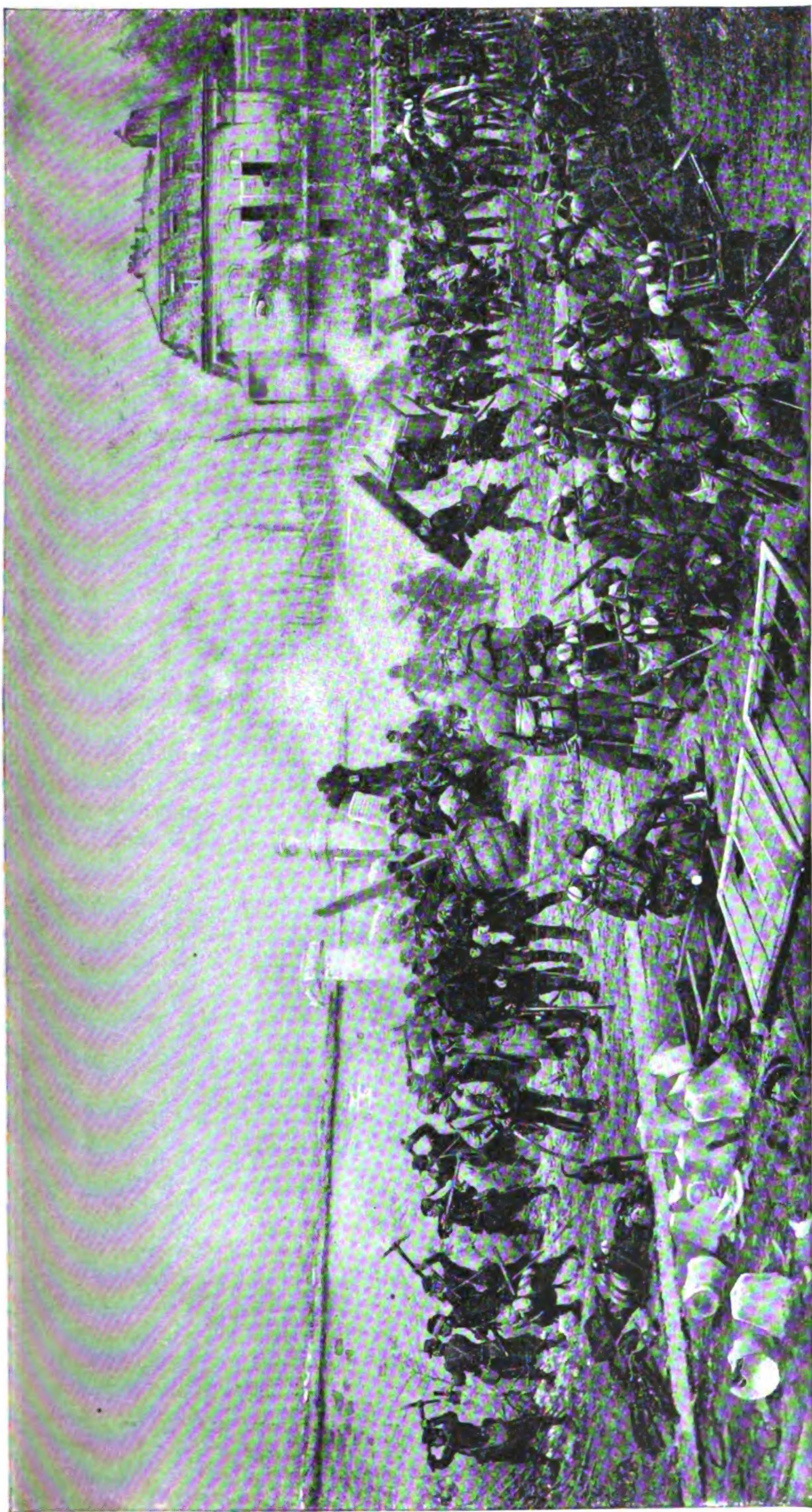
It is not twelve years since the present museum was opened, and but ten more since the earliest steps were taken toward its organization.

It owed its inception to the disinterested efforts of a number of public spirited New Yorkers—artists and art patrons, and during the first years of its existence it was maintained entirely by voluntary subscriptions. Its collections, which were then, of course, scanty enough, were originally housed on Fifth Avenue between Fifty Third and Fifty Fourth Streets, and afterward in the Douglass mansion on West Fourteenth Street. In 1880 they were removed to their present quarters, erected for them by the municipal park department, and forming part of a still larger mass of buildings to be completed in the future. Here they have grown immensely in extent and value. So rapid, indeed, has been their expansion that it might have been well if a stricter supervision had been exercised over the accessions to the museum.

Some of the departments might be strengthened by pruning and revision, their level of merit being very uneven.

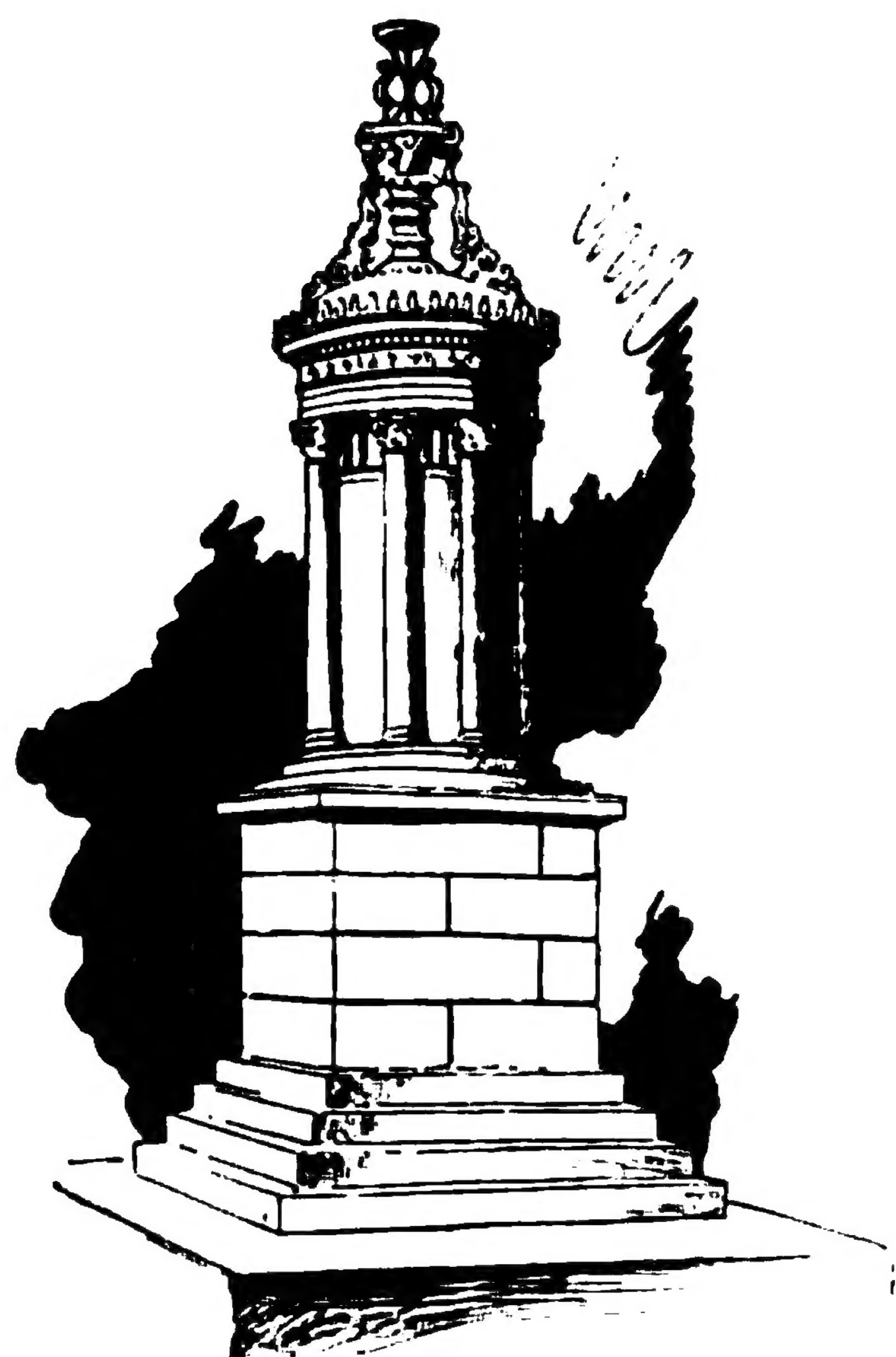
The museum as it now stands is a two story building about two hundred feet square, of red brick with light sandstone trimmings. The lower floor contains six large halls, with a few smaller rooms and alcoves, which are mainly, but by no means entirely, devoted to antiquities. The hall first entered by the visitor is occupied by casts of ancient sculpture, most of which is Greek, though there are two series of Assyrian friezes, from the palaces of the monarchs who ruled Nineveh twenty eight centuries ago.

On the right of this hall is one mostly filled with cases of Egyptian antiquities, including several re-



"THE DEFENSE OF CHÂMPIGNY," THE MASTERPIECE OF EDOUARD DÉTAILLE.

Presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Mr. Henry Hilton.



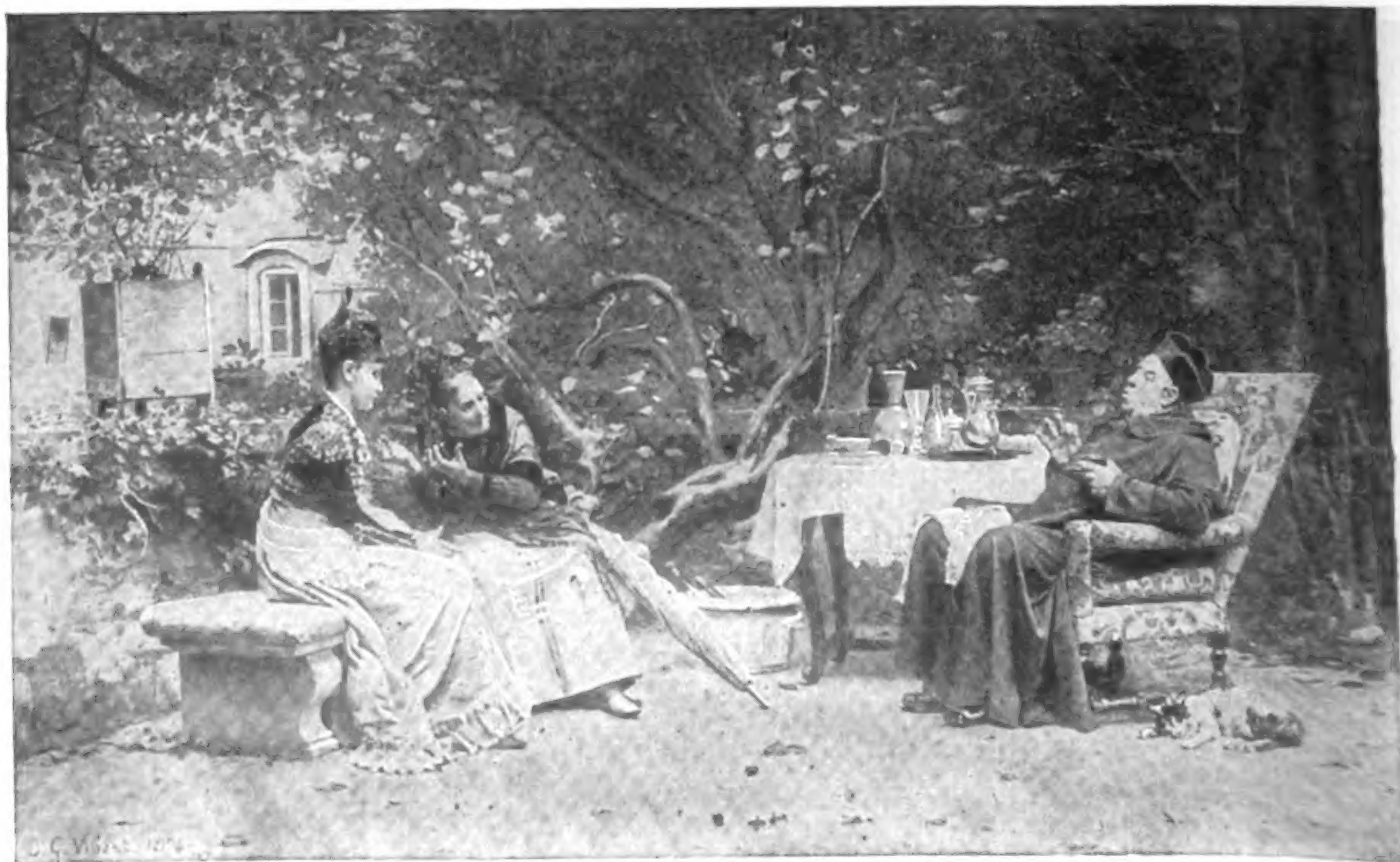
CAST OF THE CHORAGIC MONUMENT OF LYSICRATES, AT ATHENS.

markably perfect and ornate mummies, disintombed by the famous Egyptologist Maspero. Continuing the circuit of the museum in this direction, we pass through a row of piers into a small apartment devoted to antique terra cottas and more Egyptian relics, and then,

beyond a stair case, into a hall of statuary, bronzes, and inscriptions. This last is separated by piers from the large central hall of architectural casts. By turning to the left from the entrance of the museum, instead of to the right, this hall may be reached through a hall of glass and ancient pottery, a room occupied by musical instruments and carved wood, and a hall of modern sculptures.

The collections in these divisions are so extensive that they can no more be described within the limits of a magazine article than they can be adequately inspected during a stroll through the museum. The cases of Egyptian, Phœnician, Greek, and Roman glass in the hall of glass and pottery are worthy of especial note, forming as they do one of the finest extant gatherings of the kind. The pottery is less remarkable, and its value has been impugned by charges of undue liberties taken in "restoring" defective specimens. In the same hall, upon iron standards with swinging leaves, are exhibited some admirable antique laces.

To most visitors the hall of archi-



"THE REPRIMAND," BY JOHAN G. VIBERT.

In the Catharine Lorillard Wolfe collection.

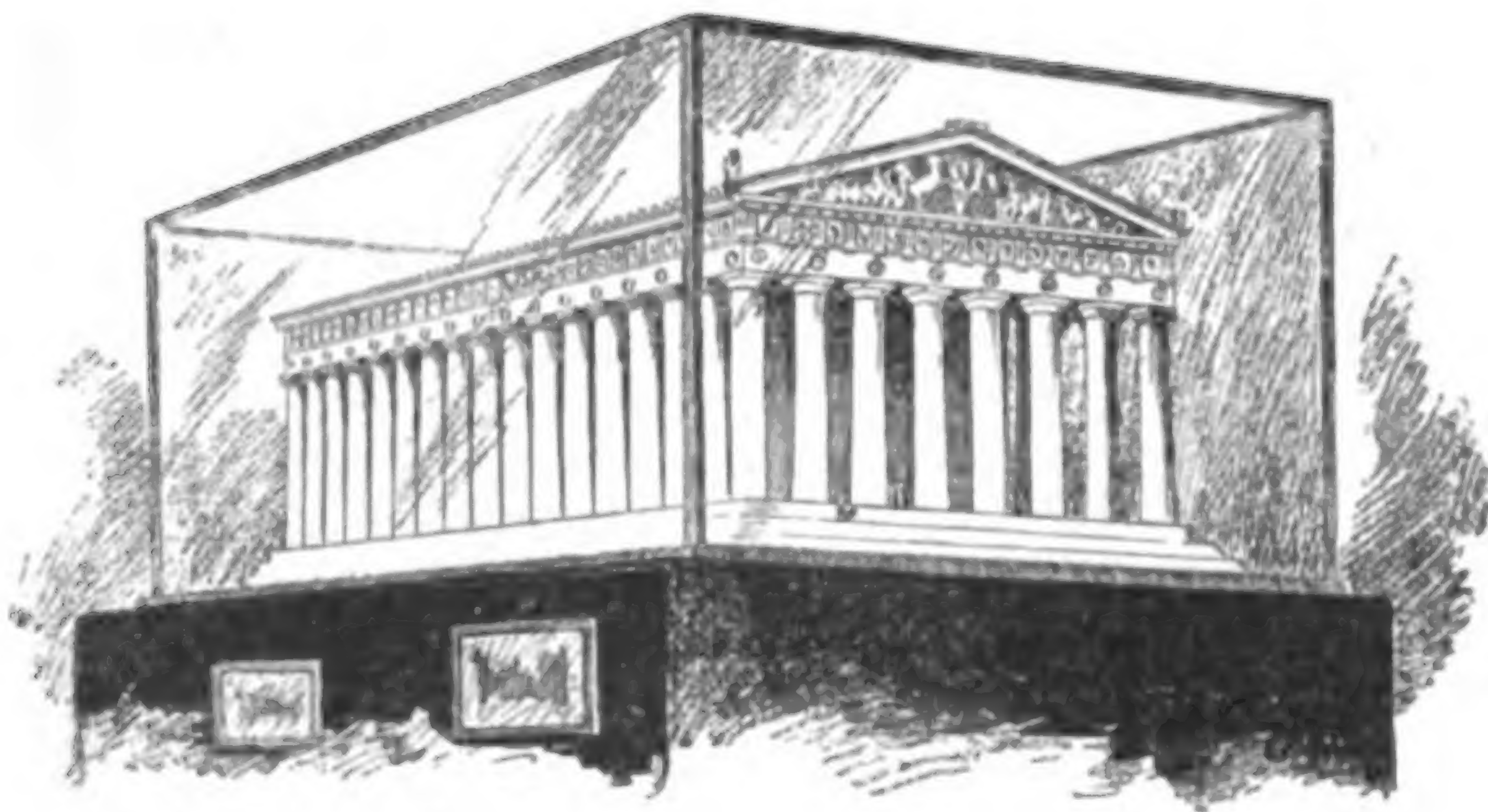


"THE LAST TOKEN," "LOST," AND "THE SHULAMITE WOMAN."

A group of gems in the Catharine Lorillard Wolfe collection.

tectural casts is the most interesting division of the lower floor. Here are displayed two notable paintings, both of great size—Hans Makart's "Diana's Hunting Party," and Benjamin Constant's "The Emperor Justinian and his Ministers." In the center of the hall is a cast of the beautiful carved stone pulpit in the cathedral of Sienna, executed by Niccolo Pisano in the nineteenth century. West of this stands a reproduction of another masterpiece of its kind—the shrine of St. Sebald, in the church of that saint at Nuremberg. This elaborate Gothic canopy of bronze, with its figures of the twelve Apostles and twelve fathers

of the church, and a somewhat incongruous addition of cupids and sea monsters, was modeled by Peter Vischer of Nuremberg and his sons, in 1519. On the north side of the hall is a diminutive copy of the facade of Notre Dame, constructed upon a scale one twentieth as large as the actual dimensions of the famous old Parisian cathedral. To the east is a miniature model of the Parthenon—not in its present ruined condition, but perfect as in the days of Pericles. The real size of the great Athenian temple is shown by some of the neighboring casts of a few of its architectural details. Another classical model is that of



MODEL OF THE PARTHENON AT ATHENS.
In the Hall of Architectural Casts.

Lysicrates's monument to commemorate his term as Choragus.

The upper floor of the museum consists of eight galleries, two of which lie together in each corner of the building, and several transverse galleries and smaller rooms. Of the eight chief galleries, seven are filled with paintings; the other divisions are assigned to drawings, etchings, and water colors, to gold plate and gems, oriental porcelains, American antiquities, and memorials of Revolutionary heroes.

Painting, the chiefest and most beautiful of all the arts, counts around her shrine more devotees than those who worship any of her sister goddesses. The galleries whose walls are hung with the canvases of old and modern masters constitute the museum's foremost attraction. The display is a more than creditable one. During its brief existence it has outgrown others of greater age and prestige. If the splendid examples already set by public spirited donors are followed in coming years, as they should be, the present galleries will become the nucleus of a collection worthy of the future greatness of the western metropolis.

The museum has now a number of the very best and finest works of the modern French artists, with a few specimens of other schools, and a considerable showing of old masters. The towering names of mediæval Italian art—Raphael, Titian, Correggio—are not represented. The

few extant works of these most famous of all painters are so jealously guarded by their present possessors that very few of them, probably, will ever cross the Atlantic. But the museum can show, among its own canvases and those loaned to it for exhibition, fine specimens of Rubens, Rembrandt and Velasquez, and a Murillo, besides Cuyp, Teniers, Van Dyck, and lesser masters.

The first gallery entered from the stairway will probably be that designated by the letter Y, in the northeast corner of the museum. Its contents are old paintings, chiefly Dutch and Flemish, loaned to



STATUETTE OF ATHENE.
In the Hall of Ancient Statuary.

the museum for exhibition. Here are Rubens's portrait of his second wife, the girl of sixteen whom he married when he was fifty three, and Teniers's "Temptation of St. Anthony." The French school of the last century is represented by Greuze's "Study of a Head"; British art of the same period by a large portrait group by Sir Joshua Reynolds; and American, by Gilbert Stuart's well known portrait of Washington. For this picture the father of his country sat several times, and among the many and curiously different likenesses of the First President this has been generally accepted as the most authentic. The adjoining gallery (X) is occupied by paintings, some of which are the property of the museum, while others are merely loaned to it. Among the former are Brozik's large canvas, "Christopher Columbus at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella," presented by Mr. Morris K. Jesup; Bastien LePage's striking "Joan of Arc," presented in 1889 by Mr. Erwin Davis; Alexander's portrait of Walt Whitman, and a portrait of a lady, painted and given to the museum by Mr. William M. Chase. The loaned paintings are subject to change and rearrangement from time to time, and the museum's new season (which opens on the 3rd of November) may see some important additions. The most notable exhibits of the past season were Alma Tadema's "Reading Homer," a fine and characteristic example of this British artist's work, loaned by Mr. Henry G. Marquand; Bierstadt's "Donner Lake"; a pastoral scene in southern England, by George H. Boughton, and four fine Rembrandts, the property of Mr. H. O. Havemeyer.

In Gallery O, in the southeast corner of the museum, is the Marquand collection of old masters,



"GRAZIELLA," BY JULES LEFEBVRE.

In the Catharine Lorillard Wolfe collection.

containing some fine portraits by two of the greatest of all portrait painters—Velasquez and Rembrandt. There is a Turner here, one of the very few in America, but it is a rather poor and badly faded specimen of the great English colorist's landscapes.

Crossing to the west side of the museum, in the two galleries of the Catherine Lorillard Wolfe collection and the two galleries of modern masters the chief gems of the museum's pictorial exhibit are to be found. Miss Wolfe's bequest of the gathering that bears her name was indeed a munificent one. Besides



"A QUARTETTE," BY WILLIAM T. DANNAT.

Presented to the Metropolitan Museum by Mrs. Dannat.

about a hundred and fifty canvases, many of them of high value, she left, at her death in 1887, an endowment of \$200,000, to provide for the maintenance and future increase of the collection. All of its pictures are modern, and most of them French. There are three Meissoniers, two Détaillés, a Bouguereau and two Bonheurs, and among other names of the French school that figure upon the catalogue are those of Cabanel, Lefebvre, Vernet, Gérôme, Vibert, Jules Breton, Bonnat, Schreyer, and Munkacsy. Then there are examples of the Munich school—Piloty, his pupil Gabriel Max, and Kaulbach—besides Knaus of Düsseldorf and Hans Makart of Vienna. Here, too, are the Spanish artists Fortuny (seen to better advantage, however, in the Modern Masters Gallery) and Do-

mingo; Sir Frederick Leighton, president of the English Academy, and the Anglo-American George H. Boughton. The last named is represented by "A Puritan Girl"—a figure painted on wood; Sir Frederick by a small head, entitled "Lucia," which is hardly a favorable specimen of his smooth coloring.

The first picture in the gallery is, appropriately enough, Cabanel's full length portrait of Miss Wolfe, which was painted from sittings in Paris in 1876. Another work of this artist, famed chiefly for his portraits and historical pieces, is "The Shulamite Woman"—an imaginary embodiment of the "fair one" of the Song of Solomon. This latter is one of the group of canvases shown on page 149. Close beside it is Auguste Schenck's "Lost"—a large painting

of sheep caught in a snowstorm in the mountains of Auvergne. Next to this, under a scene in Venice by the Spanish artist Rico, is the very striking "Last Token," by Gabriel Max. The young Christian martyr in the arena of a Roman amphitheater—the leopards' jaws stained with the blood of their last victim—the rose that has been dropped to her from above, with its hint of a romance—every detail of the scene has a tragic fascination.

A little further on is Vibert's "Startled Confessor," a clever picture of a priest horrified by the confession of a red frocked Spanish beauty. A companion to this is "The Reprimand," which hangs in the adjoining gallery. It is an especially characteristic piece, in which Vibert's favorite figure, the well fed old priest, snuff box in hand, listens to the scolding administered by a peasant woman to her pouting daughter.

Next to the "Startled Confessor" is one of Henner's auburn haired nudes—a class of subjects for which the artist manifests a peculiar predilection. Near this is a fine Détaillé, a scene from Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, in which a squad of the richly uniformed veterans of the Emperor's body guard are struggling fiercely with a body of unkempt Cossack horsemen. Beyond are Bouguereau's "Brother and Sister," and Jules Breton's fine "Religious Procession in Brittany," picturing the *pardon* or festival of St. Anne de Palud.

In the other gallery hang, side by side, Bonnat's "Roman Girl at a Fountain," and the well known picture of "The Storm," with its graceful youth and maiden fleeing before an approaching shower. This was painted to Miss Wolfe's order by Pierre Cot, and exhibited in the Salon of 1880. Not far away is Lefebvre's melancholy "Graziella," a fisher maiden of Capri, gazing seaward from the rocks of her native isle. Near this is Kaulbach's "Crusaders," a large canvas remarkable for its immense elaboration and for its effective grouping. It is a symbolic

portrayal of the triumph of mediæval Christianity. In the host gathered before the golden domes of Jerusalem are such heroes of the crusades as Peter the Hermit, who kneels in the middle foreground, Godfrey of Bouillon, who stands on a hill top and raises aloft the crown of the holy city, Tancred of Normandy and his cousin Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum, with troubadours, penitents, soldiers, and the mythical Armida and Rinaldo of Tasso's epic.

Separated from the Wolfe collection by a room filled with memorials of Washington, Franklin, and Lafayette are the so called Old Western Galleries, filled with paintings by modern artists. Of this gathering, as of the other, the chief gems are works of the contemporary French school. It contains two of that school's most famous masterpieces—Rosa Bonheur's great "Horse Fair" and Meissonier's "Friedland, 1807." A third painting, less renowned, perhaps, but no less worthy of renown, is Détaillé's "Defense of Champagne."

The "Horse Fair," which occupies the entire north wall of Gallery U, was painted by Mlle. Bonheur in 1852, and exhibited in the Salon of the following year. She offered it to her native town of Bordeaux for twelve thousand francs. The offer was declined, and she sold it to a London dealer for forty thousand francs. It was sent to America on exhibition, and purchased by the late A. T. Stewart, on whose death Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt bought it at auction for \$53,500, and presented it to the museum. The work has been engraved and copied a thousand times, and is so familiar that it needs neither description nor eulogy.

In the place of honor upon one of the side walls of the same gallery is "Friedland," which was also one of Mr. Stewart's pictures, and brought \$66,000 at the sale of his collection in 1887, when the purchaser, Judge Hilton, gave it to the museum together with Détaillé's masterpiece, which hangs opposite to it. Of "Friedland" Meissonier wrote to

Mr. Stewart, "I did not intend to paint a battle—I wanted to paint Napoleon at the zenith of his glory. The soldiers cry to him that they are his, and the impressive chief, whose imperial will directs the masses that move around, salutes his devoted army." And in the execution of this idea, on a scale unusual for this painter of small canvases, Meissonier brought to bear all the minute exactness, the laborious attention to details, that were peculiarly his own. It is said that to insure the absolute correctness of the dusty and trampled wheat beneath the feet of the horses, he made studies in a field of grain through which he had hired men to ride.

On the other side of the gallery is the "Defense of Champigny," judged by not a few critics to be the strongest painting in the museum. In movement and interest it certainly compares not unfavorably with "Friedland," while in artistic perfection and historical exactitude it is fully equal to Meissonier's famous work. The incident depicted occurred in December, 1870, when the invading hosts of Germany were closing in upon Paris. A chateau in the village of Champigny, on the Marne, is occupied by the 113th French regiment of the line, under General Faron, who stands in the center of the picture. Sappers are making embrasures in the garden wall, through which sharpshooters are opening fire upon the German troops advancing to the attack. The artist, who served as a private in the Garde Mobile during the siege of Paris, was an eye witness of the scene, which he has portrayed with a degree of vivid force that is almost startling.

These three great landmarks are not the only notable pictures in gallery U. Fortuny's portrait of a Spanish lady, presented by Mr. Alfred Corning Clark in 1889, is worthy of much more than a passing glance. Next to it is William T. Dannat's "Quartette," another remarkably strong piece of work, and one probably entitled to the distinc-

tion of being the finest painting by an American artist in the museum. William Magrath's "On the Old Sod" is a characteristic canvas, and interesting as a venture into a field little touched by pictorial art.

In the adjoining gallery V are Lerolle's large canvas, "The Organ Rehearsal"; Julien Dupré's "Balloon," with its wondering group of peasant haymakers; two good examples from the brush of the Dutch painter, Josef Israels—"Expectation," and "The Bashful Suitor"; and Piloty's many figured group representing Thusnelda, the wife of Arminius, led captive by Germanicus at his triumphal entry into Rome.

The list of American artists of whose work specimens are to be found in the museum is quite a long one. Of Dannat (a New Yorker by birth) and of the Irish-American Magrath, mention has already been made. Of the rest, among the best are Francis D. Millet's "A Cosy Corner" and George Fuller's "And She was a Witch"—both in the modern masters galleries. Kensett's landscapes and seascapes, of which there are more than twenty, deserve notice as being among the comparatively few canvases for which American artists have found inspiration in American subjects. Most of our painters have gone abroad for their themes, as in Walter Gay's "Les Fileuses," Chapman's "Italian Girl," and Ulrich's "Glass Blowers of Murano." Does the American continent offer nothing in the way of *genre* subjects?

If the museum's collections give evidence of the fact that American art is still overshadowed by that of Europe, they also afford gratifying proof of the forward strides that our wielders of the brush and palette have made, and of the advanced position they now hold. The development of a school of painting requires a long preparatory stage of national education. To that education no single element contributes more than such silent yet eloquent teachers as the galleries of the Metropolitan Museum.